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For Immediate Release
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Why Unclaimed Property Should NOT be moved from the Office of the State Treasurer to the Department of Revenue

1-UNCONSTITUTIONAL

Moving Unclaimed Property out of OST but still having OST funded by that program is unconstitutional. There was an opinion from the Attorney General on this in the 70s (see 61 Op. Atty Gen 208 1972). Please also see the Uniform Unclaimed Property Act (Wis. Stats. Section 177.23(2)(e)).

2- MORE TAXPAYER BURDEN

If a change is made to keep Unclaimed Property from funding OST, that would then become another expense pulled from the general fund. In other words, \$544,000 each year (approximate figure) would need to come from taxpayers to fund the Office of the State Treasurer. Why create another burden on the taxpayers of Wisconsin?

3-FEWER RESOURCES VS. MORE (AS PRESENTED TO THE JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE)

DOR may have more people, but this line in the budget to move OST to DOR does not provide more resources to locate rightful owners of Unclaimed Property. It takes away 2 claims representatives. There is no plan to provide additional staff from DOR to help locate owners or heirs. Essentially, the move cuts the UP claims processing staff in half. Why does that matter? Take a look at the numbers....

4-THE NUMBERS

- OST has 4 claims processors.
- They processed more than 29,000 claims in 2012. Most states have upwards of 20 claims processors and turn out at least 10% fewer claims.
- Those 4 individuals returned \$35.9 Million dollars to Wisconsin residents and businesses in 2012.
- OST will exceed returning \$100 Million dollars in 3 years by the end of 2013.
- That's \$100 Million dollars getting pumped back into Wisconsin's economy

5-WHAT CAN YOU DO AS LEGISLATORS?

- Share this with your colleagues.
- Take 5 minutes to discuss what this means.
- Ask your colleagues on JFC to make a motion to strike this item from the budget and agree to discuss further at a later date.
- Ask the Governor to line item veto the move of Unclaimed Property out of OST.
- Take a look at other agencies and use OST as a model on efficiency.
